

A DRINK BEFORE THE DARK

An original radio drama by
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AUTHORIZED FOR NON-COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION, WITH ATTRIBUTION-ONLY

PRODUCTION SCRIPT

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CAST

MUSICIAN Guitarist at an empty bar
BARTENDER Bartender at an empty bar
STRANGER Stranger who stumbles across empty bar

* Roles are written as male, but genders can be changed with minor amendments to the script

Music calls for "Give My Love To Rose" played by solo guitarist. This song can be interchanged with a similar somber traditional song as needed.

1 A DRINK BEFORE THE DARK

2

3 SCENE: A DARK BAR ON THE EDGE OF THE WORLD - VAGUELY SOUTHWEST

4 (MUSICIAN, BARTENDER, STRANGER)

5 MUSIC: _____ END OF "GIVE MY LOVE TO ROSE," SOLO GUITAR

6 MUSICIAN: ... And don't forget, to give my love to

7 Rose...

8 SFX: _____ BEAT OF SILENCE. THEN ONE RELUCTANT HAND

9 CLAPS

10 BARTENDER: Encore, encore.

11 MUSICIAN: (GROANS) You think they'll keep paying me to

12 serenade you, boss?

13 BARTENDER: Hard to tell. Think they'll keep paying

14 your tab?

15 MUSICIAN: Let's try it. Pour another.

16 SFX: _____ STEPS APPROACH, SIT DOWN AT THE BAR.

17 BARTENDER FASHIONS A DRINK.

18 BARTENDER: Bombay Gimlet, just the way you like it.

19 MUSICIAN: (SIPS) Reminds me of a better time.

20 SFX: _____ THUNDER RUMBLES.

21 MUSICIAN: Storm's coming.

22 BARTENDER: Here it goes again...

23 SFX: DOOR SWINGS OPEN. ANXIOUS STEPS COME IN.

24 STRANGER: Hey, you got a place to tie up my horse!

25 BARTENDER: What's that?

26 STRANGER: Jesus, a mean one's coming in, could be a
27 twister!

28 BARTENDER: Take a load off, stranger, have a drink.

29 STRANGER: Did you hear me? The damn sky's about to
30 tear the roof off our heads!

31 SFX: BEAT OF SILENCE

32 MUSICIAN: She hasn't yet.

33 MUSICIAN/BARTENDER: (PAUSE, THEN LAUGH)

34 STRANGER: What's with you two?

35 BARTENDER: Call us the welcoming committee.

36 MUSICIAN: Where you're going, I think a twister's the
37 least of your worries.

38 STRANGER: What?

39 BARTENDER: Like I said, you better sit down.

40 STRANGER: But the horses!

41 BARTENDER: You ever wonder why they call this place a
42 ghost town?

43 STRANGER: What?

44 MUSICIAN: Ain't cuz of the economic stimulus, I can
45 tell you that.

46 STRANGER: Look, you giving me shelter, or not?

47 BARTENDER: There's a roof over your head here,
48 stranger, hard telling if that's shelter
49 though.

50 SFX: SHARP CRACK OF THUNDER - HORSE WHINNIES

51 STRANGER: My horse --

52 MUSICIAN: Forget about it. Forget about the horse.
53 Forget about your home. Forget about it
54 all.

55 STRANGER: But --

56 BARTENDER: What he's getting at, is that it's all over
57 for you now. Welcome to the bar at the end
58 of the world. Entry to the next one. Like
59 I said, least we can do is offer you a
60 drink.

61 MUSICIAN: How do you like it?

62 STRANGER: (SHOCKED) Strong.

63 BARTENDER: That we can do.

64 SFX: BARTENDER STEPS OFF, POURS A DRINK. FEW
65 HESITANT STEPS CREEP FORWARD.

66 STRANGER: You're mighty strange folk.

67 MUSICIAN: Only gets weirder from here. When you get a
68 few centuries to think about things, it
69 screws up your inhibitions.

70 STRANGER: (WITH DREAD) So this is really what it's
71 like? What happened to me?

72 SFX: _____ BARTENDER PUTS DRINK DOWN ON BAR

73 BARTENDER: Oh it's the same old story every time.
74 Horse throws you in the storm, struck by
75 lightning, tumble down a hill as you wander
76 in the dark... Hell, what's it matter?
77 Outcome's the same.

78 MUSICIAN: You got a lot of thinking ahead of you.

79 STRANGER: Damn. There was a lot I was planning to do,
80 you know. And mercy, to never see sweet
81 Sarah again...

82 MUSICIAN: There's always more to do. Too bad you
83 didn't get to it.

84 STRANGER: So I don't get a second chance, no quest to
85 get back to the land of the living? No
86 pearly gates, none of that?

87 MUSICIAN: Life is a hard thing. Death is worse.

88 STRANGER: (HESITANT) So what happens next?

89 BARTENDER: Finish your drink.

90 STRANGER: Okay. (GULPS) Now wh-- (CHOKES, SOMETHING'S
91 WRONG) Wh -- wh --

92 BARTENDER: It only hurts a moment, stranger.

93 MUSICIAN: I'll let you go with a sad song, it's one of
94 my favorites.

95 STRANGER: (GURGLE, GROANS) N-- No! Nooooo!

96 SFX: BODY COLLAPSES TO FLOOR, THRASHES

97 MUSIC: SOLO GUITAR, "GIVE MY LOVE ROSE" (OR SOME
98 OTHER SUITABLE SONG) - ~ 30-60 SEC, CHORUS

99 SFX: THRASHING IS OVER. THUNDER RUMBLES IN
100 BACKGROUND, STORM WINDING DOWN. BAR IS
101 STILL FOR A MOMENT.

102 BARTENDER: Well he went about easily as the last.

103 MUSICIAN: They never have gold on them anymore.

104 BARTENDER: It was never gold we did this for.

105 MUSICIAN: I still don't know why we do it, boss.

106 BARTENDER: Neither do I. But how a drink to mourn the
107 dead?

108 MUSICIAN: Make it a double.

109 MUSIC: CYMBAL SHIMMER - THEN SOLO GUITAR INTERLUDE
110 - FADE OUT